

AMENDMENTS TO CLAIMS:

In the following Amendments, underlining indicates added text, while
strikeout indicated deleted text.

1. (Cancelled)
2. (Cancelled)
3. (Currently Amended) A gGram-positive microorganism having a mutation or deletion of part or all of the gene encoding CP3₁ said mutation or deletion resulting in the inactivation of the CP3 proteolytic activity.
4. (Currently Amended) The gGram-positive microorganism of Claim 3, ~~according to Claims 1, 2 or 3~~ that is a member of the family genus Bacillus.
5. (Currently Amended) The microorganism ~~according to~~ of Claim 4₁ wherein ~~the member~~ said member of the genus Bacillus is selected from the group consisting of *B. subtilis*, *B. licheniformis*, *B. lentus*, *B. brevis*, *B. stearothermophilus*, *B. alkalophilus*, *B. amyloliquefaciens*, *B. coagulans*, *B. circulans*, *B. lautus*₁, and ~~and~~ *B. acillus* *thuringiensis*.
6. (Currently Amended) The microorganism of Claim ~~1, 2 or 3~~ wherein said microorganism is capable of expressing a heterologous protein.
7. (Currently Amended) The microorganism of Claim 6₁ wherein said heterologous protein is selected from the group consisting of hormones, enzymes, growth factors, and cytokines.
8. (Original) The microorganism of Claim 7₁ wherein said heterologous protein is an enzyme.
9. (Currently Amended) The microorganism of Claim 8₁ wherein said enzyme is selected from the group consisting of a proteases,

carbohydrases, and lipases; isomerases, ~~such as~~ racemases, epimerases, tautomerases, ~~or~~ mutases; transferases, kinases, and phosphatases.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Cancelled)

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Currently Amended) A method for the production of a heterologous protein in a *Bacillus* host cell comprising the steps of

- (a) obtaining a *Bacillus* host cell comprising nucleic acid encoding said heterologous protein wherein said host cell contains a mutation or deletion in at least one of the genes encoding ~~cysteine protease 1, cysteine protease 2 and~~ cysteine protease 3; and
- (b) growing said *Bacillus* host cell under conditions suitable for the expression of said heterologous protein.

14. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 13, wherein said *Bacillus* cell is selected from the group consisting of *Bacillus subtilis*, *B. licheniformis*, *B. lentus*, *B. brevis*, *B. stearothermophilus*, *B. alkalophilus*, *B. amyloliquefaciens*, *B. coagulans*, *B. circulans*, *B. lautus*, and *B. acillus* *thuringiensis*.

15. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 13, wherein said *Bacillus* *Bacillus* host cell further comprises a mutation or deletion in at least one of the genes encoding Apr, Npr, Epr, Wpr and Mpr ~~apr, npr, epr, wpr and mrp~~.

16. (Currently Amended) A ~~g~~Gram-positive microorganism having at mutation or deletion in at least one of the genes encoding ~~a cysteine protease selected from the group consisting of CP1, CP2 and CP3~~.

17. (Currently Amended) The microorganism of Claim 16, further comprising a mutation or deletion in at least one of the genes encoding Apr, Npr, Epr, Wpr and Mpr ~~apr, npr, epr, wpr and mrp~~.